Jefferson Davis - - An All American Statesman

(Note: By request, the following remarks are published. They were made at a meeting of the Southern Guard Chapter, Pittsylvania County, United Daughters of the Confederacy, by Calvin Robinson, Editor of The Times-Virginian).

JEFFERSON DAVIS
SECRETARY OF WAR

By Calvin Robinson

I bring you greetings from Historic Old Appomattox Court House, where the dying gasps of a weary Confederacy rolled up the James from Richmond, like a mournful sobbing, and on Palm Sunday, 1865, became still, as two great Americans Robert Edward Lee and Ulysses Grant worked out a Gentlemen's Peace.

It is always a pleasure to be associated with the wonderful ladies of the U. D. C. So many U. D. C. Chapters have graciously invited me to make some remarks as speaker on varying occasions, I feel sort of "honorary member." You will recall that when our forefathers laid down their arms at Old Appomattox, the man selected to lead the procession up the hill was that peerless leader of the old Raccoon Roughs from Alabama and Georgia, that final commander of Jackson's Bridage, the immortal John B. Gordon. You will also recall that General Gordon went on to a fabulous career after the War. And it was the same John B. Gordon, who on April 30, 1886, standing on the rear platform of a train at West Point, Georgia, introduced the wondrous Varina Anne, Winnie, Davis to an applauding throng as "The Daughter of The Confederacy." The very next day, May 1, 1886, at the unveiling of the monument to Benjamin H Hill, in Atlanta, Georgia, the eloquent Henry W. Grady introduced Winnie again as "The Daughter of The Confederacy." These words went deeply into the hearts of our Southland, and from this inspiration, gradually the various Ladies Memorial Associations and Auxiliaries joined together and became one under the name: United Daughters of The Confederacy. In these perplexing times, of our generation, we still look to the wisdom, the charm and the unconquerable dignity of Our Southern Ladies to lead us in keeping inviolate our matchless heritage.

Now, I come to you today with an assignment as to my subject matter. I have been asked to speak of Mr. Jefferson Davis, with emphasis on his service in the years prior to the War Between the States, and especially as Secretary of War in the Government of the United States.

Not having any speech already written about Jefferson Davis, it became necessary for me to go to my library, which is enriched with many rare books about the Civil War period of our history, and make a full study of our President. And it has been most rewarding to me, and I stand here and say that our times would profit by a reappraisal of the career of this great man. In fact, my study has led me to designate him as: Jefferson Davis —All-American. The phrase "All-American" comes from the world of sports, but in the public mind it designates sterling qualities of physical, mental and inspirational make-up worthy of emulation and acclaim. I salute Jefferson F. Davis, as an All-American hero.

Heavens to Betsy, we live in an age of specialization, and records are made and honors are won by those who master minute details in specialized fields. There are specialists who can relate, in learned detail, incidents overlooked by the average historian. Recently I sat for over an hour listening to an historian describing just one small incident in the Battle of Chancellorsville, And it is the same with the entire subject of the Civil War. As we approach the Centennial Years, the volume of research and prying into special fields will increase.

Ah yes, and all that is wonderful and one and all we will be benefitted by this detailed research.

But, I come here as "A Country Editor" from Old Appomattox Court House to suggest that you do not know, you do not understand, a life by picking out a few incidents here and there. When the Great Judge shall appraise us on that Day of Judgment, we would desire that the entire life, its background, motives and performance, be considered, rather than some particular sin or virtue.

A famous biographer of Jefferson Davis from Ohio, Landon Knight, perhaps spoke the truth when he said that Jefferson Davis was "the most misunderstood man in history."

In the time at my disposal, I will approach this subject with the motive of trying to understand a man so many have misunderstood, and suggesting that he was truly an All-American Hero.

What was his background?
What about his family?
And his education?
Did he have greatness before the first shots of the War at Fort Sumter?

What sort of man was he, his thinking, his manner, his personality, and his innermost beliefs and convictions?

In answer, let us look at the record and I will proceed with the record so far as time will permit, and then suggest that you continue on your own, a re-appraisal of President Davis.

We have traced his family back to ancient Wales, where there was a prominent citizen by the name of SHION DYFED, which translated from the Welch becomes, John Davis. Some of his people came to America in 1701, and settled in Pennsylvania. Our hero's father was 18 years old when Mr. Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence, and its inspiration touched Samuel Davis down, living then, in Georgia. Samuel's two half-brothers were among the first to answer the call for our First War of Independence, Daniel and Isaac. Samuel soon joined them and he was recognized as a leader, and organized his own company, and was its captain.

He performed with especial distinction in the defense of Savannah, in 1778. Now, there are varying stories in history as to the date of the first arrival of the Davis family and where they are settled. But we do know that they were outstanding people, with an early kinsman one of the first Presidents of Princeton Uniibersity. Perhaps the original arrivers in America were Sir Jonathan, Captain Dolan, and you know how hard it is to pin down ancestry. The point is that our hero's people were of the upper class, of property and of culture. It was from the Captain Dolan Davis side of the family that Samuel was born, and they were then settled in Georgia. Samuel Davis married a bonny girl of Scotch-Irish named Jane Cook. She was of the finest aristocracy of the pioneer days. It is attested that Jane Cook was a person of tremendous vitality and retained her brown hair, and remarkable fresh beauty, until she was over eighty years of age.

And so, Samuel Davis and Jane Cook were wed, and they had ten children. But they moved to the pioneer country, and 1793 found Samuel and Jane moving to Kentucky, she was a babe in arms. They settled, then moved again and finally established a plantation in Christian County, Kentucky. At approximately two - year intervals, Jane presented her husband with 4 Kentucy-born daughters:Lucinda, Amanda, Matilda and Mary. And then, on June 3, 1808, the last of the children was born and he was named Jefferson for the peerless Sage of Monticello and "Finis" because he was the last of the children.

Now, the others did well. His brother Joseph became one of the renowned attorneys and plantation owners of his generation. All the way through the family line, the story is of excellence. Even to this day. Jefferson Davis had five great grandsons, and all five of them served in World War II. And he had four great granddaughters, and the husbands of all four served in World War II .This is a family tree of which any one could be proud and I know of no grander in America.

Young Jeff was given the very, very best as to education. He attended a private school for a spell, for no public schools were available, and then he went on to larger and better schools. On the way to a school, his party stopped by at The Hermitage, and met the fabulous Andrew Jackson, and our hero never forgot his impressions of the tremendous personality he met there.

Ah yes, this story could unfold into the fascinating drama to you, as it did to me. From Transylvania College, Jefferson Davis was given an appointment to West Point Military Academy. He was appointed by President James Monroe to a cadetship, in 1824. Bless us, 1824 was the year John Adams died, and it was the year Thomas Jefferson died, and the year Stephen Collins Foster was born. It was a time of decision as a great wonderland unfolded to settlers and as there came the first rumbling of a contest between those favoring the cause of local self-government, for which they had come to this cotinent, as opposed to those who accepted an all-powerful central government with only a smile at the Constitution and a smirk at the Rights of States.

Jefferson Davis went to West Point, and his career there adds up to only one thing: He was an All-American. It is indeed true that his fellow student, Robert E. Lee went through the course at West Point without a demirit as to conduct, while young Jeff Davis was accumulating so many demerits it became a sort of a record. It adds to the personal charm of Davis to study his West Point career and that he was very much a human being, accepted as one of the most popular cadets and showing every indication of potential greatness. He was the sort of man you could get along with, and he graduated well toward the top in his class.

After his graduation, he was assigned to an outpost as a lieutenant and his charm of personality began to reveal itself. At the square dances and social functions, they all raved about young Lieutenant Davis..

And so it was that he met and loved a wonderful young lady, the daughter of a then Colonel in the U. S. Army, Zachary Taylor. Taylor went on a great military career and then to become President of the United States, And Jefferson Davis married his daughter. But the young bride developed malaria fever, and died some six months after the wedding. Our hero went into seclusion, resigned his commission of the army, and became a foremost expert at plantation operation along the mid-Mississippi.

Time does not permit me to tell the full story of the life of this great man. He fought against the Indians, and won fame in the Black Hawk Wars. He displayed great ability, and won the respect of the Indians. One tribe elected him as a Chief, and Black Hawk always said that Mr. Davis was a great man.

He then won great fame in the Mexican War. But I must hasten on to recount his career in Washington.

Oh, let me recall that when Jefferson Davis went to the United States Senate, there were great men there. He was but 39 years of age. Ex-President John Quincey Adams was there, and so was Daniel Webster. Henry Clay and John C. Calhoun were there. When Calhoun died in 1850, Davis was the one recognized as the leader of the Southerners. But his was a truly national viewpoint, and one of his orations was in defense of Daniel Webster when the later was attacked. He was chairman of the Senate Military Affairs Committee and it was his leadership that resulted in enlarging and perfecting the armed forces and rallying patriots seeking a preservation of Constitutional government.

Ah yes, Franklin Pierce is not on the current list as a Great President, but he did, at least one great thing. When he assumed the Presidency in 1853, he literally drafted Jefferson Davis for his Cabinet as Secretary of War. And I state it as my belief, that Jefferson Davis was the greatest Secretary of War the United States ever had.

I submit that had Jefferson Davis no other claim to fame save his record as Secretary of War under President Franklin Pierce, he would today be entitled to rank amoung the greatest of all Americans, But he had many claims to fame.

He rendered distinguished service in the Black Hawk War.

He served gallantly in the Mexican War.

He was a great hero at Monterey, was wounded at Buena Vista, and scaled the walls of the City of Mexico.

He introduced the wedge movement to save the day at Buena Vista.

He was first to suggest transcontinental railroads connecting the Atlantic and the Pacific.

To enable supplies and protection to reach the West Coast as the Gold Rush brought in new settlers, he brought in camels from Africa to convey military supplies, and I have been along this route, across the sands of the Southwest, and the modern highway across the route today is named: The Jefferson Davis Highway.

He was the first to suggest buying the Panama Canal Zone.

He was first to suggest the purchase of Cuba.

He set up American trade with China and Japan.

He revitalized and enlarged the U. S. Army by four regiments.

He re-organized the cavalry service of the army.

He introduced light infantry or the rifle system of tactics.

He brought about the mass production of guns, rifles and pistols.

He built up the fabulous Colt's Armory.

He was responsible for having the frontiers surveyed.

He gave responsible positions to young officers.

He appointed Robert E. Lee to be Superintendent at West Point.

He had forts repaired and new ones built.

He was responsible for the expansion and erection of many public buildings in Washington, D. C., including the Senate Hall, the new House of Representatives, and the Treasury Building.

He was responsible for the construction of the aqueduct supplying Washington.

After his service as Secretary of War he returned to the Senate, and I challenge any list of great Senators of all time which does not bear his name. Especially do I treasure a copy of his Farewell Address in the Senate, when the Southerners withdrew. And it was to be expected that Davis was the one chosen to be President of the Confederacy.

Oh, listen to me, as I quote the words of Fitzhugh Lee as he spoke of President Davis. He said:

"When the ship of the new Republic was launched he was called to the command and was with her 'rocked in the cradle of the deep.' Storms of war burst upon her deck before her machinery was even put in motion: but through the thunder's roar, when the cordage was rent, when the breakers were dashing against her, when disgair was visible upon the faces of the crew, ... the captain was seen standing calm, heroic, resolute, grand in all the glory of a man, grasping with a firm hand the helm as she sank down down, into the sea of eternity."

Within the bosum of Virginia repose the ashes of great men, men whose lips and lives have taught us to revere the very mention of our Heritage. The Father of our Country lies buried where the majestic Potomac sweeps in a graceful curve upon the shores of Mt. Vernon. Ah, yes, and the grave of the author of the Declaration of Independence is found where the Little Mountain bears its proud head above the plains of Albemarle. The Sage of Montpelier rests quietly now in Old Virginia, and so do many others whose greatness thrills our generation as we see the waters of the James rolling from rock to rock and caressing acres we clasp in loving embrace as home. Virginia has been called the Mother of States and the Mother of Presidents. And, I beg to include the name of Jefferson Davis. He was born in Christian County, Kentcky, which county later became Todd County. But what is it? Kentucky was the Daughter of Virginia, and so the Old Dominion was the Mother of the birthplace of Davis. It has been my privilege to visit Beauvoir, near wonderful Biloxi, Mississippi, and I stood with tears in my eyes, in his little office there ,where after the War he wrote the story of "The Rise and Fall of The Confederacy, But too, my wife and I were at the U.D.C. ceremony at the Dedication of the restored Jefferson Davis Cassmate, and we stood in the very cell where this great President was chained as a common prisoner, and worse. Virginia today claims the ashes of Davis, and our state has many precious memories of him.

I will not ask your indulgence longer. You have listened graciously and permitted a humble historian from Old Appomattox to speak simply and with sentiment about a subject to his heart. I conclude with the prayer that the reverent love for our Southland will not fade away, but rather that all through the years we will treasure and commemorate the memory of the gallant deeds, the noble ideals of the peerless sons of Dixie, who placed honor above expediency, and duty above life itself.

Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, Stuart, Johnston, Hood, Gordon, Ewell, Mosby, Shelby, Wheeler, Longstreet, and hundreds, literally hundreds of others, wrote an imperishable page into history.

They are our immortals, as are their ideals our destiny. Ah yes, somewhere above the roar of the jets, and the orbits of the satellites —somewhere beyond the moon, yes, somewhere above the sun and the planets, and wherever it is that the souls of mortals become immortals find their heaven, even now inspire us and guide us, and await to greet us some day, someday we will find them — across the River of the Milky Way, and Resting under the Shade of the Trees by the Throne of God.

Liberty Chapel

Liberty Chapel, June 24.- Mr. and Mrs. Percy Garrett were the supper guests Friday of Mr. and Mrs. Jessie Harvey, Jr., of Lynchburg.

Mrs. Mildred Mann, Mrs. Harry V. White and J. L. Thornhill visited friends and relaties in Lynchburg, Roanoke and Abingdon and Bristol last week.

J. H. Reynolds, L. C. Reynolds, and Mr. and Mrs. Carl Martin spent several days last week as guests of Mr. and Mrs .Lyle Davidson, of Columbus, Ohio.

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Historic Appomattox Gave Unity and Peace to America

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VOL. 27 NUMBER 27 APPOMATTOX, VIRGINIA THURSDAY JULY 2, 1959 Subscriptions Rates $2 Per Year

Father Darkleaf

by L. h. r.

Those visiting Mr. and Mrs day were Mr. ry and Roland

Mr. and Mr were the dinne Mrs. Murrell Appomattox.

Mrs. Martin and Bruce and have returned a week's visit and attending School.

Dinner guests Mrs .Sam Thos lie Garbee, Mr Wooldridge and burg; Charlie ington, D. C.; Henry Stanley

Visitors over and Mrs. Pat and Mrs. Billy Sam Thornhill, bridge, Miss Mrs. Henry Sa L. Thornhill and Thornhill and

Mrs. Percy S ginia, Baptist for treatment.

De Valera de farewell.

American lan closest in yea

Soviet said work abroad.

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Heart surge brain damage

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Rainfall 14 Inches For Year; 0.93 For June

Water Supply Holding Up

Appomattox has experienced an amazingly dry June, but the town water supply has stood up under heavy use. Town Manager C. J. Hunter, says that the thing that has saved the water supply has been the fact that schools were not in session during the parched period. Had the three big schools been in use during the dry period, it is likely that the water tanks would have run dry.

Mr. Hunter stated that the main service of good water, insofar as the water tanks are concerned, would be to cut down on the use of water. He estimated that up to a twenty-five per cent reduction in water use would follow a good rain.

Before new wells were brought into use, the town, on occasion, had to curb the use of water for such things as washing cars and watering gardens and lawns. During the current dry period, the town has "made out" but with little to spare.

Spirit of '76 Kept Alive in Va.

The Fourth of July Spirit of 1776 is maintained today in the outdoor drama, "The Common Glory," now in its 13th consecutive summer-long season in Williamsburg. The symphonic drama vividly recreates the thrilling story of the Virginia patriot leaders in the American Revolution. —Photo by Jim Mixson.

Transco To Give Safety Awards

In honor of the employees of Compressor Station 17, Appomattox and the Communications, Engineering and Measurement Departments, systemwide, who established a perfect safety record in 1958, the Transcontinental Safety Achievement Award Presentation Ceremonies, held under the auspices of the Safety Department, will be conducted on the local station grounds on Wednesday, July 8, at 5:30 P. M. The ceremony will be followed by a Texas style U. S. Prime Beef Barbecue.

East Germans see failure of Geneva conference.

Softball League

Game Results

Thursday night, June 25: Oakville 6, Appomattox Garment Co. 2; Guill's Esso 7, Pen Lane 0 (forfeit)

Friday night, June 26: Guill's Esso 12, Jaycees 7; Oakville 20, Stonewall 5.

Monday night, June 29: Oakville 4, Pen Lane 2, (8 innings).

Tuesday night games rained out, to be played Monday night, July 6, at 7:00 o'clock.

League Standings

Team	W	L
Oakville	10	0
Guill's	5	5
Pen Lane	5	5
Appomattox Garment Co.	4	6
Jaycees	1	9
Stonewall		

The Schedule

July 2: Oakville vs Jaycees; Garment Co. vs Guill's.

July 3: Pen Lane vs Oakville; Jaycees vs Stonewall.

July 7: Garment Co. vs Jaycees; Oakville vs Guill's.

Tobacco Growers To Nominate Director

Members of the Virginia Dark-Fired Tobacco Growers Marketing Association residing in Appomattox County are meeting at the Court House at Appomattox on Saturday, July 11, at two o'clock, to nominate candidates for director to represent Appomattox County.

On July 25, which date also falls on Saturday, the Appomattox County members will go to the same meeting place and cast their ballots for the candidate of their choice. The voting hours will be from 1 to 5 P. M.

Farm Bureau Meets On Bangs Study

The Appomattox County Farm Bureau has invited all cattle owners interested in the eradication of Brucellosis (Bangs) to attend a meeting at the Court House at Appomattox on Tuesday, July 7, at 7:30 P. M.

It is anticipated that Appomattox County will, in the very near future, begin participation in the area test program. Fifty-four counties in Virginia have completed the testing and are modified, certified brucelosis free.

Nineteen counties are now in the process of completing the testing program.

Dr .Calvin Sevy, local veterinarian, and Dr. George B. Estes, Assistant State Veterinarian, will discuss the effects of Bangs to man and cattle and how the testing program will be conducted.

This is a part of a nation - wide effort to eliminate a disease. It is estimated that losses due to Bangs alone amount to 100 million dollars a year. It is important to all, as it affects man as well as cattle.

Demonstration Club Schedule

Schedule of meetings of home demonstration clubs next week:

Monday, July 6: 4-H Electric Project instruction meeting at Holiday Lake 4-H Camp, 9:30 A. M. to 3:30 P. M.

Monday, July 6: Annual recreational meeting of the County Leaders Club will be held at "Beckwood," at 6 P. M. Members are invited to bring their families. Covered dish supper furnished by members will be served.

Tuesday, July 7: Lee Club will meet at 2 P. M. at the home of Mrs. F. A. O'Brien. Mrs. George Perdue and Miss Odelle Webb will give the demonstration.

Thursday, July 9: Miss Betty McClaskey, Extension Associate Clothing Specialist will hold a special interest meeting on clothing construction at the home agent's office from 10 A. M. to 3 P. M.

Thursday, July 9: Stonewall Club will meet at the Community Center with Mrs. Lester Carson and Mrs. Tom Davidson as co-hostesses. Demonstration will be given by Mrs. Wilton Routon and Mrs. Lyle Thomas.

Friday, July 10: Evergreen 4-H Club will meet at the school, 7:30 P. M.

It seems that the Weather Man has been playing away out in left field and is barely earning his keep.

On June 1, Appomattox had 0.39 inches of rainfall. One June 2, we had 0.10 inches. And again on June 4, we were blessed with 0.17 of an inch. There it was zero, zero, until June 17, when we had a shower amounting to an imitation of shallow dew: 0.03 of an inch. And on the last evening of the month, June 30, Appomattox had 0.24 of an inch. This adds up to 0.93 of one inch for the month.

Actually, Appomattox is running well below normal rainfall so far in 1959. The monthly totals are as folows, according to Mrs. John P. Taylor, the official local Weather Bureau recorder:

January: 2.41
February: 0.98
March: 3.72.
April 4.47
May: 1.59
June: 0.93.

This adds up to 14.10 inches for the first half of the year.

Normal rainfall for this area is in the neighborhood of forty inches a year. Save for the normal totals in March and April, the results as of now would be disastrous.

Pastures, crops and gardens are showing the effect of the sustained drought. Wheat was harvested in good shape, and that is about the only favorable item in the picture.

The Weather forecasters are holding out for a break, and perhaps are this paper is delivered, the rains will arrive.

State Honors Won Here

Miss Winifred Lee, member of the Hebron Community 4-H Club, won the 4-H Canning Achievement Award, a trip to the National 4 - H Club Congress, which will be held in Chicago the end of November.

Winifred is the 18-year old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Tilden Lee, of Hebron Community. She has completed a total of 46 projects in her eight years in club work. Her record shows that she canned sixty different varieties of fruits, vegetables and other products raised on their 150-acre farm, a total of 3,296 quarts of foods canned. She has shown her canned products at Five County Fair and Lynchburg Farm Show.

Winifred has developed in leadership, and has held offices in her club and county organizations.

She has won a total of 185 prizes which totalled $234.50.

Barbara Lee, Winifred's sister, represented this district in the canning contest by giving a demonstration on canning tomatoes. Her award was a red ribbon.

Ann Martin, sixteen year - old daughter of Mr. and Mrs .R. K. Martin, represented this district in the frozen food contest. Her demonstration was showing how to properly wrap meat for freezing. Ann won the state award, a twenty-five dollar Savings Bond. Ann is a member of the Lucky Clover 4-H Club and has served her club as president and secretary.

Eloise Rosser, 16 years old, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jimmy Rosser, won the state award on her demonstration on dairy foods, "Making Cheese Puff." Her award was a 19-jewel gold watch. Eloise is a member of the Lucky Clover 4-H Club and is corresponding secretary of the club.

Other 4-H members participating in the state demonstration contests were Gary Ann Carson and Betty Jane Alvis, in the egg grading contest. They are both members of Hebron Community 4-H Club. Betty Jane is president of her club. John Osborne Harrison won a red award on his demonstration in livestock conservation. John is also a member of the Hebron Community 4-H Club. Percy Lugade, won a blue award on his electric demonstration. Percy demonstrated how to make an electric hot bed. He is president of his club, the Lucky Clover.

An Estimate

"What will it cost me to have my car fixed?"

"What's the matter with it?"

"I don't know."

"Fifty-two dollars and fifty cents."

Big gains shown in grain futures.

Play safe — drive carefully.

Measuring Acreage Tobacco Growers

C. D. Hix, III, chairman of the Stabilization and Conservation County Committee, announced today that the measuring of tobacco acreages is moving ahead at a rapid pace. The field work has been completed on 65 per cent of the farms in the county. Comparison of acreage data with allotments in the office, Mr. Hix said, and notices will be notified of results of the performance check as quickly as possible.

Producers who are found to have planted in excess of their allotments and receive notices of excess acreage are urged to contact the ASC county office immediately to be informed what disposition they desire of the excess acreage. Mr. Hix points out that prompt action by producers who have excess acreage will speed up the work in enabling the county office to better serve producers.

France to name concerns helping

ATTENDING LEGION - AUXILIARY BOYS AND GIRLS' STATE

Charles Gills, Broderick Pack, L. N. Garrett Jr., Patsy Gilbert and Joan Martin will leave Sunday for Blacksburg, and Radford, respectfully. While there they will attend American Legion Boys State, and American Legion Auxiliary Girls State.

Each year the American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary, Department of Virginia, conduct a week of citizenship activities, known as Boys State and Girls State. While the boys and girls are there they spend a week of study and practice on city, county and state government. The counselors are all well qualified men and women, who give their time for this week of worthwhile activities. This year American Legion Boys State will be held at V. P .I., and the Girls State will be at Radford.

While these States are under the direction of the American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary, girls and boys from the junior class of high school who meet certain standards may be sponsored by other groups who are interested in training our future citizens. The cost of a sponsorship is $27.00.

This year Patsy Gilbert is sponsored by the Senior Woman's Club; Joan Martin by the Appomattox Unit 104, American Legion Auxiliary; Charles Gills by the Lions Club; L. N. Garrette by Post 104, American Legion, and Broderick Pack by the Junior Chamber of Commerce.

. . . . Patsy Gilbert

. . . . Joan Martin

. . . L. N. Garrette, Jr.

. . . Broderick Pack

. . . . Charles Gills